



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART IN THE ORIENT

(Special Correspondence of THE COLLECTOR.)

AMOY, September 24th, 1891.

THIS is one of the places which supplies travelers and curio dealers with the hideous idols, called "josses." Here they are manufactured, wholesale and retail, "moderns" and "antiques," orthodox or to order as may be desired. I am sorry to be obliged to state that much of the joss business is a fraud, pious and otherwise. The regulation joss is either a very fat and placid gentleman, with a large genius for lolling, or a dignified, virtuous female with a superfluous number of arms and hands. You could have your bedroom filled with images of this sort without having a nightmare or causing a new hired-girl to shriek on entering the apartment. But these styles didn't suit merchants who desired to astonish their folks at home, nor missionaries who wished to horrify hayseed congregations with tales of woe and gore. So to please these two classes of customers, the Mongolian joss-maker with a keen eye for the main chance turns out an assorted lot of clay hobgoblins, warranted to freeze the blood of a small boy or produce hysterics in a nervous and dyspeptic girl. In this category came, the man with the tiger-face and ferocious fangs, the so-called "God of Hunger," who is only an every-day, half-starved opium smoker, and the "Snake God," who probably is a phase of delirium tremens. None of these belong to Chinese art. They are simply "fakes" made for the market of Christendom.

Joss-making is very simple. The manufacturer's chief stock in trade consists of wooden or metal moulds. In these the wet clay is put into shape and allowed to dry. It is then touched up, dipped in molten glaze and allowed to cool. The average workman can turn out a hundred a day. The clay is kaolin, running from red and gray to snow white, and costs about a cent a pound. The glaze is melted in a small charcoal furnace, similar to the old-fashioned soldering furnaces of retired plumbers. The wages of a good artist vary from 20 to 40 cents a day. The cost of a fair-sized image is about 3 cents. He sells it for 5 cents to a native and for as high as \$5 to the credulous European or American tourists. The moulding, touching and re-touching are the same in all the shops. The glazing varies indefinitely. It may be opaque of any color; transparent but tinted with any shade desired, or clear and colorless. The best work in Amoy is made by painting the clay with heavy white paint and dipping in the glaze last described. In another kind of good work, the clay is colored in caustic colors, kept in the heat until these have set, and then glazed as usual. The Chinese are very skilful in this field of labor and with fine brushes will turn out "josses" that at first sight might be mistaken for cloisonné.

Antiques are popular with the dealers, as they can be planted and dug up to order from any desired age or dynasty and bring a handsome profit. The simplest is the "black-joss." It is made by painting a clay cast with a preparation of tar, bitumen, shellac or Ningpo varnish, wrapping in several thicknesses of paper and "firing" it in a kiln. According to the preparations and treatment you can obtain a black, brown, red-black, blue-black or dark-gray product. The color sets through, so that a fracture discloses a very clean and uniform surface. There is little or no vitrification in this treatment, which makes the coat resemble a carving all the more. "Touching" removes any irregularities or defects, and also adds the signs of decay which usually accompany the flight of years. A few of these "black-josses" are enameled, and are eagerly bought by sapient globe-trotters. Another and very different group of josses are those carved from wood and covered with gold and gay colors. Many of these are very ancient and are much more in demand than the pottery-ware. They are carved with evident skill, and retain their brightness for years. The prices vary according to size, workmanship and amount of gold or other decorations covering them. The smallest made are but an inch high and bring a few cents; the largest are 10 to 12 feet high and cost \$150 to \$500 and upwards. In the larger sizes (say those of a foot high) the carving is admirable and the coloring life-like and very artistic. There are four of these large-sized josses in the famous temple of Lam-pa-do at the entrance of Amoy harbor, and they produce as imposing an effect as any collection of statues in the galleries of Europe.

Josses carved from stone are rare, and dear. Great Mandrins pay fabulous prices for small ones made from jade; those made of the pale-green and light-blue shades of that precious mineral are much more valuable than the white, yellow or brown. Lin, the former Governor of Formosa, owns one about 8 inches high, which is said to be 15 centuries old, and to be worth \$10,000. Small ones of 1 to 2 inches high in Canton, seldom cost less than \$250. The difficulty of cutting the refractory stone is enormous and is the chief reason for its

high price. In Foo Chow they make many josses out of stealite and selenite of various colors.

EDWARD BEDLOE.

To-Kyo, September 28th, 1891.

From now on for the next five years will be the golden opportunity for the collector to secure the finest specimens of Japanese swords. The market has never before contained and never will again such an assortment, as regards either beauty, economy, historic value, variety or workmanship. The reasons are simple enough. The opening of Japan to the outside world and the introduction of fire-arms was a fatal blow to the swordsmith's industry. Before that event, the makers of swords formed the wealthiest and most powerful guild in the Mikadate. The medieval rivalry between Milan, Toledo and Damascus was insignificant alongside of that of the great armors of Japan. Competition caused experiments in metallurgy, alloying, forging and tempering, that produced results of high value and disclosed mechanical secrets to the workers in steel that are unknown to the best cutlers of Europe and America to-day. They produced blades, with perceptible tints in violet, blue, green, red, silver and gold. Saladin's sword that would cut a veil or a cushion, and Richard Cœur de Lion's, which would sever a steel mace, could have been duplicated in a hundred shops in the days of the Shogunate. Upon the sword, art ran mad. The smith learned to arrange the fibres of the metal, so as to form geometrical patterns, the figures of flowers, fruits and leaves, and even the Chinese characters composing quota, tions from the great poets and philosophers. Their skill in this field bordered on the marvelous. You can obtain superb weapons even now which in the brightest light seem made from metal mirrors. Put them in the sunlight so as to cast a reflection on a dark surface, and in the illumination you will see in faint lines every pattern I have described. The effect is the same as that produced by the magic mirrors of Japan, but how it is done no one knows.

The appearance of this flood of weapons upon the market is due to an additional cause. Under the ancien régime, every noble, high and low, was attended by two-sworded men-at-arms, just as the robber-barons of the middle age were accompanied by steel-clad swash-bucklers. In 1860, there were, it is estimated, at least 400,000 "two-sworders" in Japan. The revolution of 1868 changed all this in a twinkling. Sword-wearing, except by the police and the soldiery who had the ordinary European weapon, was made a crime. The two-sworder lost his occupation, and his tools of trade were locked up as mementoes of the golden past. But, twenty years have come and gone, the Mikadate is an established fact, and all hope and desire of a return to the old feudal system have become mere echoes. A new generation has arisen which cares for money and not for the "hero's weapon," and the old one, which loved the blade for its past, is rapidly dying out. The consequence is that young Japan with admirable thrift is putting the weapons of his sires and grandsires in the curio shops to exchange them for *yen* and *sen*, the dollars and cents of their mint.

So many have taken this course that the market is more than glutted. Murata Kimber must have 6,000 in stock; Daizen, 1,000; Osaka-ya and Handa-ya as many each. In Yokohama, Arthur, Peebles, Walsh and Kuhn must have 1,000 each, while in the great Deakin galleries can not be less than 7,000. Two-thirds of these weapons have tasted blood. All are interesting, a majority are very handsome, while a few hundreds are simply superb works of art. The prices at times are so low as to be laughable. \$3, \$2, \$1.50, \$1, and even 75 and 50 cents will procure a weapon such as Broadway dealers have frequently sold for \$50 upwards.

The low prices have put many noble weapons to ignominious uses. Here and there in the rich farming lands near Tokio, the little Jap goes beyond the Biblical prediction and turns the sword into a plough share, a reaping hook, a pruning knife, a carver, a poker and even a skewer. One day I saw two fishes roasting on a blade which may have swung in the great wars between China and Japan.

There is no handsomer ornament to a drawing-room or library than a trophy of arms, and of these the most attractive are a set of old Japanese swords, with their exquisitely carved hilts, their noble blades and their fantastic yet ever beautiful scabbards. It is to be hoped sincerely that our people will take advantage of the present opportunity in this country before speculators and European buyers shall have exhausted the best part of the stock.

WM. E. S. FALES.

A national museum has just been opened at Brunswick by Prince Albrecht of Prussia, the regent of the duchy. It contains a splendid collection of all arms of the last four centuries, a great number of rare Brunswick uniforms and flags, and curious and interesting relics of the great wars, as well as many portraits of much historical interest. The formation of this museum was suggested by the Emperor William.

The Art Institute of Chicago has awarded the James W. Ellsworth prize of \$300 for the best American picture to Frank W. Benson of Boston, for his painting "Twilight," and the institute prize of \$250 to Gari Melchers. The Ellsworth prize is limited to pictures painted in the United States; the institute prize is not. Mr. Melchers wins the latter by his "Dutch Pilots" painted in Holland and shown last summer at the Salon.